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FROM ROME TO FORMIA ON THE TRACK OF
HORACE, *Satires* i. 5.

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Many of us no doubt have vaguely dreamed of a journey along the Via Appia (and such supplementary roads as the conscientious archaeologist may demand) in the genial if ghostly company of the fifth Satire of Horace. But most of us must be content to make acquaintance with but a few miles of the "Queen of Roads," and these in such disconnected fragments as to recall the satire of Lucilius rather than of Horace, trusting to an uncertain future for the opportunity to unite these separate bits in one continuous progress and laying to heart meantime the admonition of the poet-philosopher himself:

Quem fors dierum cumque dabit, lucro
adpone.

It was the fortune of the writer in the spring of 1914 to become acquainted for the first time with two such fragments of a *disiecta via*. One of these, easily accessible to walkers of moderate ability, was a part of the section that lies between Rome and Ariccia (near modern Ariccia), Horace's first stopping-place.¹ As he says nothing of this part, noting not even Bovillae, the first regular station on the road according to the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (now represented most nearly by Le Frattocchie), an apology is perhaps needed for counting an experience here among Horatian reminiscences, especially as the direction of our progress was the opposite of that taken by the poet, and the whole episode belongs rather in the realm of pure delight than of literary history or archaeological research. But as an encouragement to the spirit of adventure, than which nothing wins ampler reward, it may briefly be recorded.

¹ Egressum magna me accepit Aricia Roma.—Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 1.

The tram returning from Albano to Rome follows the ancient Via Appia as far as the *fermata* of Le Frattocchie, where the Via Appia Nuova digresses from it at a blunt angle. This new road the tram follows. Not so the ambition of the classical pilgrim, to whom the call of the old road—faint undulating lines running from tomb to tomb into the unknown distance—is as the call of the sea to the coast-born. It is a call to which vibrate not only the chords of classical association, but the hidden fibers of remote adventurous ancestors as well, and when the tram, proving to be a *diritto*, runs past the forking of the roads, there is a sense of irreparable frustration. But a little beyond the fork there is a siding where the tram waits for that from Rome to pass. Here, to slip to the ground, disregarding the remonstrances of puzzled motor-man and disapproving companions, and thus, as Ennius might have put it, “frustrate the frustration,” needs but a moment of thought and a small degree of quasi-youthful agility. *Facilis est descensus*, and to walk six miles on the old road, to the Tor di Selce, and thence by some convenient crossroad reach the railroad station of Capan-nelle, in time for the 7:24 train for Rome, seems in the glamor of the moment a simple plan. Only when the tram, trailing clouds of prophesied disaster, has disappeared in the distance and the step has become irrevocable, is the certain uncertainty of any knowledge as to the whereabouts of crossroads and stations likely to recall the other half of the Vergilian quotation.

In the late afternoon of a day in May the classical memories associated with Bovillae are not reassuring. The thought of approaching twilight is not made more cheerful by recollections of the murder of Clodius; the ghosts of the Julian *gens*, of which Bovillae is said to have been the cradle, are likely to be one's only fellow-travelers during the hours of darkness; and should morning find the wanderer still on the Campagna, no “Anna of Bovillae” is likely to provide hot cakes for breakfast, as that one of whom Ovid writes did for the plebeians at the Mons Sacer. For us, however, such considerations did not mar the enthusiasm of the start, nor did the fact that in lieu of a path across the fields to the ancient road there was only the dried bed of a stream to follow. The eye could trace the serpentine course of this gully by the bushes that

bordered it to the point where it seemed almost to abut upon one of the great grass-grown tombs beside the road, and we plunged into it without further consideration. The channel was shallow at first, but grew deeper as we proceeded, and the banks and bushes rose so high that the landscape was entirely shut from view. Only by rising on tiptoe could the first impression be confirmed, that our winding path did without doubt "lead to the tomb," a fact most opportunely proclaimed aloud by the tallest member of the party at the moment when the possibility of myriads of malarial mosquitoes in the rank vegetation through which we floundered had flashed for the first time into the minds of some of the more wary.

Emerging from the deep lane of the stream, we stood on the Via Appia and entered upon an experience that stands out unique and unsurpassed among many classical adventures, not for incident or "educational value," but for marvelous beauty of earth and atmosphere and the charm of a certain immeasurable remoteness. We were in the most solitary part of the Campagna. On all sides the crumbling masonry and the shapeless grass-grown mounds, whether belonging to distant aqueducts or to tombs or villas close at hand, spoke only of human life extinct. The lonely shepherd driving home his sheep was rather of Vergil's day than ours; the long-horned cattle belonged in the fields of Cato. Two thousand years had rolled away; the few miles of country that lay between Le Frattocchie and the Rome that centers about the Quirinal were multiplied by as many hundred, and the Via Appia, set free from imprisoning walls and from the activities of modern life that encumber and cheapen it near Rome, took on "that remoter charm by thought supplied," and, followed by the eye and the imagination into the dimness of each distance, could be realized in its full and majestic significance as the pathway from sovereign Rome across the mountains to the eastern sea and the gateway of the Orient, and the pathway from the present back into the "immemorial past."

From the east, where, as we looked back, the rugged outlines of the tombs were blurred against the sky and plain, and the rolling fields and the hills that rose from them lay pink and lavender under a glow of golden light, we were "stepping westward" into the setting

sun. In front, against a brilliant sky, the tombs stood hard and black, marking the way to the Tor di Selce, that rose on the horizon above the rest, with the low sun gleaming through a solitary window. At times the stones of the ancient pavement peered from the tall grasses that grew between them. At times the road could be traced only by the troughs and billows in the green, where infrequent wagon wheels had left their trail. The silence was absolute, and the peasant that we met passed softly and mysteriously as a being from another world. And as the shadows lengthened and the mists began to rise, the light on the hills, growing ever more wonderful and more unearthly, seemed to sweep downward across the plain, till sky enveloped earth and both were merged in one translucent sea.

The spell was broken when the Tor di Selce was reached and the anticipated crossroad proved to be the only unreal thing of the vision. Neither was cart or carriage of any sort in sight. But a friendly shepherd boy, opportunely emerging from behind a tomb, became our guide, and under his protection we cut across the untrodden fields while the blazing eye of the Tor di Selce grew dim and darkened, and a chill as if from thousands of hidden sepulchers seemed to rise about us from the sun-deserted earth. From the patronage of the shepherd we passed to that of a band of jovial revelers in a wayside osteria, and a succession of more or less disreputable cicerones, under whose voluble but random advice we began the pursuit of a *stazione di ferrovia* that combined the characteristics of the rainbow's end and the will-o'-the-wisp. The *Antica Osteria*, the *fermata* of Capannelle, the *stazione* of Campo Ippico—we were handed on, as it were, from one to another of these, till at 7:21 precisely a railroad station at Capannelle proved after all to be more than a figment of Mr. Baedeker's imagination.

The other section of the Via Appia explored was that between Terracina and Formia. Circumstances did not admit of making a personal acquaintance with the part between Ariccia and Terracina, but here the railroad trip is so delightful in itself and embodies so many of the features characteristic of the other, that it offers a fairly satisfactory substitute and an interesting and appropriate introduction to the next section.

The Campagna, sweeping around the base of the Alban Hills, reaches southward between the Volscian Hills (the Monte Lepini) and the sea, to lose itself in the Pontine Marshes, which, technically speaking, extend from Foro Appio (about on a line with Sezze), for some thirty miles, to Terracina. The width of this stretch of level land varies from six to eleven miles. Once graced by 24 flourishing cities, if we may believe Pliny, through lack of cultivation and drainage incident to the long succession of wars between the Volscians and the Romans, this region, practically from the beginning of authentic history, has been a pestilential marsh, rivaling in deadliness and in beauty the Etrurian Maremma.

The Via Appia, after passing through the valley of Ariccia, the *mansio* where Horace halted first, after leaving Rome, skirts the slopes of the hills in varying relations to modern highways, leaving Civita Lavinia to the right and Velletri to the left, and, descending gradually to the plain, runs almost in a straight line to Terracina. Parallel in a general way with the mountains and the coast, it cuts through the heart of the lowlands—*Pomptinos via dividit uda paludes*, Lucan says of it—somewhat nearer the mountains than the sea. There were in ancient times, according to the Antonine and Jerusalem itineraries, four stations between Ariccia and Terracina: Ad Sponsas, Tres tabernae, Forum Appii, and Ad Mesas (modern Mesa). Horace records stopping at only one of these, Forum Appii, where he abandoned the road for the supposedly more comfortable mode of travel by canal boat, and spent the night memorable for noisy frogs and noisier boatmen, bad drinking water, and teasing gnats.¹ This part of the road seems always to have been difficult to keep in good condition, and many well-known names are associated with its repair—the emperors Vespasian, Nerva, and Trajan, with others of later date. Pius the Sixth, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, was last in the line of restorers, and his road and the accompanying canal, the Linea Pia, are still in use.

The railroad more wisely, and surely with no less beautiful a pathway, keeps close to the hills. Their vine-grown slopes and

¹ . . . inde Forum Appii,
differtum nautis, cauponibusque malignis.
Hoc iter ignavi divisimus.—Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 3.

turreted walls of glistening gray rock rise often almost directly from the track, upon the left. Little towns line the valleys and perch upon the ledges, and ancient citadels and castles cling about the higher rocks—Norba, Norma, Sermoneta, and Sezze—

pendula Pomptinos quae spectat Setia campos—

where Lucilius in his ante-Horatian journey is supposed to have spent the night to avoid the discomforts of Forum Appii.

Sometimes thick woods cover the lower slopes of the hills, and valleys open from them, threaded by streams, some of great name, as the Ufens and Amasenus, which contribute their shares to the general inundation of the land below.

On the right is the wide-reaching plain, Campagna and marshes blending imperceptibly, limited only by the sky and sea, till far away to the south Monte Circeo takes shape from the mists of distance, "lonely as a cloud" and as ethereal. Across the marshy land run countless watercourses, natural and artificial, in which is gathered part of the superabundant water, which in these channels creeps slowly toward the sea, sometimes with a fall of less than 1:1,000 for many miles. In the spring the herbage is of an intensely vivid green, streaked and splashed with flowers of other hues no less vivid. Cattle graze in the drier districts, and herds of spirited half-wild horses bound through the bushes as the train approaches. The human population is sparse, even in the working season, and human habitations are confined for the most part to the hills. Here and there a spot of duller color or an angle in the level sky line indicates some venerable monastery, a shelter hut, or perhaps an osteria on the ancient road, miles away toward the sea. At one point a walled town, Ninfa, stands in the marsh almost across the line of the railroad, giving promise from a distance of abounding human life. But, illusive as a derelict at sea, it shows from close at hand only the empty shell of a city, overgrown with flowers and creeping vines, and long since abandoned by mankind to the frogs and the victorious mosquitoes.

The journey by rail does not lack incidents that recall the Horatian route. The leisurely waits of the train at quiet little stations bearing the names of towns three or four miles away,

vertically if not horizontally, are tuneful with the voices of the *ranae palustres* that suggest the Forum Appii of Horace. In this land of ooze and murky streams it does not need a chemist to induce the traveler to wage the war which the insalubrious drinking-water of that place forced upon the poet,¹ and the best bedroom of the best hotel at Terracina is ready to provide mosquitoes, even in early May, as inimical to sleep as the insects that infested his quarters on the boat.²

Shortly before reaching Sezze the train runs through a valley behind a spur of the hills that separate it from the marsh, and not far beyond the point where it emerges from this valley to skirt the marsh again is the site of the Grove of Feronia,³ where Horace tells us that he disembarked, washed face and hands in the waters of the spring, and again betook himself to the rough pavement of the Via Appia. Here too the traveler on the train finds himself, if not upon the ancient road, yet looking out upon its battered tombs and familiar polygonal pavement from close at hand. For the old road and the new, after their long separation, enter Terracina almost contiguous to each other. The white little town, Martial's *candidus Anxur*, lying slantwise along the gray cliff, flashes into sight as the train rounds a curve.

Impositum saxis late candentibus Anxur

is Horace's description of it, but his commentator Porphyrio takes pains to explain that the rocks are not white, but are called so from the lime obtained from them.

This cliff, the Monte St. Angelo, extends the range of the Volscian Hills to the sea, while the main line of the hills turns inland and, following the coast beyond Terracina, sweeps in a great crescent around the bay of Fondi.

Terracina was Terracina, or rather Tarracina, long before Horace's time, and his adoption of the Volscian name of Anxur is probably due to the exigencies of meter. The conspicuousness of

¹ Hic ego propter aquam, quod erat deterrima, ventri
indico bellum.—Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 7.

² . . . Mali culices ranaeque palustres
avertunt somnum.—Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 14.

³ Ora manusque tua lavimus, Feronia, lympha.—Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 24.

its site was frequently emphasized by the Roman poets and gave additional effectiveness to its strategic position at this angle of the great road, where it blocked the approach to Rome from the south. Literally as well as figuratively the town has traveled downward with the stream of time. The citadel was on the summit of the Monte St. Angelo. The early Volscian settlement and the Roman colony clung somewhat lower along the cliff and gave rise to the mediaeval city; the port attaining great importance in the imperial era and the most modern part of the town, founded by Pius the Sixth, lie on a narrow strip of low land between the cliff, the marshes, and the sea. Livy recognizes both parts, speaking of it once as *loco alto situs* and once as *urbs prone in palude*.

The new town, commonplace, hygienic so far as the climate will allow, with well-paved streets and squares that in their names reflect the Risorgimento, and with its façades of white and yellow stucco, might have been taken bodily from certain quarters of Rome or Naples. From this glaring modernity the dark and narrow streets of the mediaeval town run inward and upward through a confused jumble of brick- and stone-work, dominated by the castle and cathedral. Often a fine Gothic window or doorway or a carved stone cornice stands out among the common masonry, and the brick campanile, with its three rows of windows supported on slender marble arches, has the beauty of others of its kind in Italy. Through the incrustation of the Middle Ages fragments of the ancient Terracina, here a column, there a bit of a frieze or a capital, emerge. The cathedral of San Pietro e Cesareo embodies parts—notably the columns of the portico—of the ancient temple of Rome and Augustus, and faces an open square, which was the Forum in Roman days, and still preserves in large letters set in the pavement the name of A. Aemilius A.F., who appears to have been a sort of architectural Maecenas to the town. Most impressive of all the relics of antiquity, the great arches of the substructures of the temple of Jupiter Anxur, look down from the seaward end of the cliff 700 feet above the plain.

On the other side of the town runs a wide canal, the scene impartially of traffic and laundry-work, and scattered huts of thatch stand almost in the swamp. Past them the beach curves to the

base of Monte Circeo, according to the Roman tradition the home of Circe. That "idle pause about the place" noted by Washington Irving seems still to persist here, amid the drifted sand and the sluggish waters, when the summer sun beats down upon that "sea without flux or reflux," and the magic mountain of the enchantress shimmers in the heat. But in the streets of the town there is teeming and vociferous life. When the cool of evening falls, and in the early morning hours, a stream of people seems to be always traveling the modernized Via Appia, which passes around the cliff where it meets the sea, to make its way thence as the main-traveled road to Fondi, Formia, and Naples. The first route of the Via Appia had been over the inland end of the Monte St. Angelo. This was its course when Caesar made the journey from Brundisium to Rome which Lucan traces:

Iamque et praecipites superaverat Anxuris arces,

and without much doubt was the one used by Horace. But sometime in the early empire its course was changed, presumably to avoid the difficulties of the ascent and descent. The face of the Pesco Montano, the great column of rock which stands like a sentinel at the end of the Monte St. Angelo, was cut away 120 feet straight downward to make room for the road between the mountain and the water. Numerals carved by the Romans at intervals of 10 feet on the rock are clearly legible today. But this part of the road was closed again in the Middle Ages, and, like the section on the Pontine Marshes, owes its restoration to Pius the Sixth.

Separated from the cliff by hardly more than the width of the road, and from the sea only by its own garden, abounding in roses as ancient Paestum, stands the Albergo Reale della Posta, where we put up on our arrival at Terracina. Our quarters were in what was originally the main part of the establishment, but is now a sort of dependence. It is a somber, mysterious building, with spacious marble stairways and enormous bedrooms named for the chief cities of Europe—Londra, Parigi, Venezia, etc. Before the hospitality of these metropolitan rooms could be enjoyed, however, Monte St. Angelo was to be climbed and dinner eaten, the latter likely to involve no less of adventure and hazard than the former, if recollections of a previous visit were to be trusted.

Recalling the route chosen by an intelligent street-sweeper who had served as guide on that previous visit, we ascended the rock by its shortest but steepest elevation, guessing at the path, if path there were, scratched by brushwood and slipping on rounded boulders, while the sun, though already low, was reflected from the rock with tropic intensity.

But an arduous climb could hardly attain a richer reward. Here, if anywhere in the world, were the *edita . . . templa serena* of Lucretius, his untranslatable *otia dia* and the home of his idle gods—soundless and windless, wrapped in cloudless ether and “glowing in lavish light wide-spread.” Terracina on the slope below was a mere impressionistic picture of a town; a streak of gray showed the course of the Via Appia, 700 feet below, and the canals ran as rivulets of fire straight from the setting sun across the dark level of the marsh. Monte Circeo loomed like a featureless island, from the *aequora* of blending sea and land, and the Volscian Hills rolled away spreading east and west in unbreaking purple waves. To the south were a sparkling sea set with nebulous islands and “all-but islands,” and sinuous coast lines, and between the coast and the hills the plain of Fondi, where in a setting of dark verdure the Lago di Fondi stretched its irregular arms across the land. Nothing was lacking and much was added to the picture of this region sketched by Martial:

O nemus! O fontes! solidumque madentis harenae
litus, et aequoreis splendidus Anxur aquis!

while Gaeta, far away to the left, and Monte Circeo to the right, were the “nurse of Aeneas” and the “daughter of the sun” that he glorifies equally with “white Anxur” in another epigram.

All about indeed seemed to be spread the texts of ancient poets and historians, illuminated beyond the skill of mediaeval scribe. Where the Lago di Fondi approaches nearest to the hills was the pass of Lautulae, a miniature Thermopylae in configuration and in the possession of hot springs, which, according to tradition, gushed forth there to block the way for the enemies of Rome in one of the Samnite wars. Between the lake and the sea lay “Silent Amyclae,” more silent now than when its Pythagorean principles forbade it

to destroy the serpents which, as Servius tells us, invaded it from the marsh and annihilated it.

Among the islands that lay against the southern horizon was Pandataria, which has gathered a melancholy fame from the women of the imperial blood of Rome for whom it has served as a prison—Julia, the daughter of Augustus; Agrippina, the wife of Germanicus; and the young wife of Nero, Octavia, “than whom no other exile brought deeper pity to the eyes of all who saw her.” To the east as to the north the Via Appia reached into the distance. Along this eastern arm of the road in the year 20 A.D., unconscious that her future prison lay so near, came Agrippina with her cortège, bearing the ashes of Germanicus from Brundisium to Rome. “Tribunes and centurions carried the urn upon their shoulders; before them moved the standards, unadorned, and the fasces turned downward toward the earth, and as they passed through the towns that lay along the route, the people clad in black and the knights in purple-bordered garments burned fabrics and incense and performed other funeral rites, according as the wealth of each town would permit.” And down the road from the north came Drusus and Claudius and the children of Germanicus, to meet the funeral train at Terracina and escort them back to Rome, where the senate and crowds of weeping people thronged the road as they approached.

Nearly half a century later, in the year of the three emperors, the troops of Vitellius coming over the inland end of the hills to the rear, from their camp near the grove of Feronia, poured down upon Vespasian’s garrison in Terracina, “to murder rather than to fight,” as they cut them down “unarmed or arming.”

It was from the landward end of the ridge that our descent was made by a route longer but less steep than the ascent had been. From a wilderness of bushes and crumbling walls we emerged upon the steeply rising Via Appia of pre-imperial times. The light was growing dim as we stepped out upon the ancient road, a dog was barking furiously, and a peasant woman, whose stalwart figure and majestic carriage were worthy of Hecate, passed with a *buona sera* that belied her air of superhuman dignity and disappeared down the road between the weather-beaten olive trees and tombs.

The dinner that awaited us at the hotel proved that in culinary matters Terracina had made marked progress in the five years that had passed since our former experience. The *suppa marina*, however, especially recommended on the menu, was without doubt a lineal descendant of that partaken of by Washington Irving's travelers in his "Inn at Terracina." The "black sea" had not paled, and the "livers and limbs and fragments of all kinds of birds and beasts floating like wrecks about it" had merely evolved or consolidated into a few good-sized fish, equipped with their full quota of fins, tails, gills, and eyes.

In the dependence a single light was burning in an upper room. Aside from this there was no indication of other guests than ourselves. Escorted by an aged dame whose words were not the more intelligible because unimpeded by the "barrier of the teeth," we groped our way from the chilly, unlighted stairway to "Paris" and "Venice," chilly, too, and dark as their namesakes have since become by night. It was at Terracina, Horace's fourth stop, that his party was joined by Cocceius, Fonteius Capito, and Maecenas. If their modern counterparts were at Terracina, they were lodged in the hotel across the way, and their conviviality observed so strictly the *aurea mediocritas* that its echoes did not reach our ears above the sound of the waters lapping on the sandy margin of the garden. But somewhere near the water's edge a group of human figures, gesticulating and assuming fantastic attitudes, stood out black against the light of a blazing bonfire, and obliterated Horatian reminiscences with visions of those brigands and pirates for which Terracina and all its neighborhood were notorious not so many years ago. Brigands and pirates—even smugglers—these mysterious figures may not have been by daylight, but by night they were nothing else.

In the carriage-house which occupied much of the ground floor of the Albergo Reale, certain curious vehicles had been noticed. They appeared to be of a hybrid species in which traits of the country diligence, the old-fashioned New England chaise, and the Quebec calèche were recognizable. The thought of a twenty-mile drive in one of these next day aroused mingled feelings of interest and apprehension. But the equipage that stood before the door at

7:30 the following morning was of a conventional modern type, disappointingly without local color.

The ultimate goal for this day's trip was Formia, whence we must return to Rome by rail. But Fondi (ancient Fundi, one of the regular *mansiones* in the Roman times, and Horace's fifth halting place) was the first town along the route. As far as this and a few miles beyond, the old Via Appia is in use or closely followed. After passing around the Pesco Montano, it first keeps to the shore of the gulf; then, as the hills recede, leaving an ever-widening area of level land between themselves and the water, it skirts their bases. These hills are steep and often bare and rugged, but the plain on the right of the road is a vast garden, interrupted only by the marshy expanse of the Lago di Fondi, which lies so low in the vegetation that if it had not been seen so clearly from the height the night before its extent could hardly have been guessed. At the time of our journey the flax was in blossom and we passed fields of almost dazzling blue. The gardens in places grew quite up to the road's edge. There were blossoming orange and lemon trees, olive trees and vines, and an occasional cypress. Little stucco houses, pink or white, with quaint outside stairways, stood amid the green, and about them chickens and pigs and goats, donkeys, and oxen of the color of mice mingled in a promiscuous democracy worthy of the first day on Mt. Ararat. The road was not lonely of human life. Brigandish peasants passed, bestriding donkeys far from brigandish; sturdy women girt about the head and neck with kerchiefs of brilliant orange and light yellow that recalled the "butter-and-eggs" of country roads at home; and occasionally a diligence, loaded with a ponderous freightage of miscellaneous humanity, enveloped in a cloud of dust. If it was the dust of travel that forced Horace to anoint his eyes at Terracina,¹ there must have been a repetition of the process at Fondi or Formia.

The Via Appia in the midst of this vivid life was yet pre-eminently a street of tombs. Though fewer and far more ruinous than in the vicinity of Rome, they still proclaimed to the traveler the dominance of antiquity. The majority of them were so far

¹ Hic oculis ego nigra meis collyria lippus inlinere.—Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 30.

demolished as to lack all individuality. But one, the most perfect, still showing eight or ten courses of carefully cut stone and part of a cornice, is assigned in popular parlance indiscriminatingly to Cicero's daughter Tullia and the emperor Galba, who, according to Suetonius, was born in one of the numerous Roman villas on the hills in the neighborhood of Terracina. Another, somewhat modernized, stands near the Naples boundary, known as the Epitaffio, and one nameless pile near Fondi is unique because of the solitary cypress that springs tall and straight from its core.

More prominent in the landscape, though not so numerous as the tombs, were "those towers that speak of piracy and corsairs," sturdy and square, with spreading bases, heavy bracketed cornices, and windows small and few. Soon after leaving Terracina we passed the first of these, the Torre Gregoriana (now a *villino*), jutting out from the road into the sea, like a lighthouse. The Tor del Pesce, farther on, stands near where the older and newer branches of the Via Appia unite, and the Torre della Portella, built against an arch which spans the road (the ancient pass of Lautulae, at this point), once marked the boundary between the States of the Church and the kingdom of Naples.

These towers of vigilance and defense did not always serve their purpose, and from the heights on one side and the sea on the other brigands and pirates, century after century, made merry in the countryside. Even walled towns were not exempt, and the notorious Barbarossa, in 1534, would have stolen from Fondi its countess, Julia Gonzaga, had it not been for the timely approach of Ippolito de' Medici from Rome.

Although Horace found no worse pest at Fondi than the vain-glorious town official with the purple-bordered garment and the censor, and his favorite Caecuban wine was native to the district just across the lake, he was glad to leave the place,¹ and one can easily imagine sharing his feelings on the subject. But we hurried, halting only for a few minutes, through the narrow central thoroughfare, the Via Appia metamorphosed into the Via Appio Claudio,

¹ Fundos Aufidio Lusco praetore libenter
linquimus, insani ridentes praemia scribae,
praetextam et latum clavum prunaeque vatillum.

—Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 34.

between rows of high, quaintly irregular houses, with glimpses down side streets of houses still more quaint, and passed out through the ponderous eastern gate, with the regret only that we had not more time to give it.

Beyond Fondi three miles of rather uninteresting country had to be traversed before the road began to ascend the mountains, which here, again approaching the sea, bar its direct course. Near the beginning of the ascent the modern highway, on which those who drive must depend, leaves the old road to follow, after the usual manner of Roman roads, the more direct though steeper route on the right of the winding gorge, the Valley of St. Andrea, that leads up into the hills, and itself takes the left. The valley is so narrow that from the new road it was easy to follow the old with the eye. Sometimes its course was marked by a bridge, sometimes by substructures built for its support against the hillside. The gorge twisted upward among rounded rocky hills, covered with low green growth in many parts, but mostly bare of trees. For some distance one could look back and trace the old road and the new, first two white streaks, then one, down into the low plain and back to where the white streak broadened into the white walls of Fondi, but later the curves interfered with all distant views. Occasionally ruins of human habitations were passed, dating indefinitely into the past, but there were no pink-and-white farmhouses to brighten the gray monotony of the rocks. The gaily kerchiefed women and the "beneficent brigands" had remained in the plain below, and only one pedestrian, clad like the landscape in sober neutral tints, passed and repassed our slowly climbing carriage.

At the summit of the pass the town of Itri stretched diagonally along the hillside directly in front of our road. Itri was the birth-place of the robber Michele Pezza, better known as Fra Diavolo, and looks the part—at least when approached from the shady side, where no high lights relieve the forbidding grays and browns of its fortifying walls, which seem to grow out of the living rock.

Beyond Itri the descent began, and the new and the old roads again united. An ancient milestone stood beside the road at one point, half built over by a modern wall, and another had been

placed upon a pedestal near where the new railway had apparently come into collision with it. Certain stones, too, set in walls along the way looked suspiciously like ancient paving stones, and it seemed more than a vagrant fancy that traced in some of them, as may be done in similar walls near Rome, the ruts worn by the wheels of Roman vehicles.

The downward slope became steeper as we advanced, the hills receded, and the panorama of Gaeta and Formia with the glittering sea between lay far below. Martial's burst of enthusiasm must have been called forth by some such scene as flashed upon us here:

O temporatae dulce Formiae litus!

hic summa leni stringitur Thetis vento
nec languet aequor, viva sed quies ponti
pictam phaselon adiuvente fert aura
sicut puellae non amantis aestatem
mota salubre purpura venit frigus.

Almost as many classical reminiscences enlivened this view as that from the heights at Terracina, nor was variety lacking in them. On this coast lived the Laestrygones, "countless in number, not like men but giants," with whom Ulysses had his disastrous encounter, and hither from the sea came the invincible pirates that gave Pompey the opportunity to become the Great, and justify, though late, the ominous utterance of the Formian cow, *Roma cave tibi*. Formia was the family home of the "spendthrift Mamurra," whose sweetheart, uncouth of features and of speech, Catullus has unwittingly immortalized, and of the Lamiae. On the hillside near Formia was a favorite villa of Cicero, and the shore below was the scene of his tragic death. The great tomb assigned to him by tradition loomed in the field to the right of the road as we approached the town, and it was the Via Tullia in which the Via Appia lost its identity and between whose towering buildings we drove as through a canyon. The *Ristorante Cicerone* and the shop of a certain M. Scipione flew past, and with clatter of hoofs and cracking of whip we drew up in front of—"The Modern Hotel!"

The comfort of this hostelry is well attested, but the kitchen of Horace's Capito¹ would better suit its environment in the Albergo

¹ Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 38.

della Quercia. This charming inn, so close upon the water that fish might almost have been drawn in by a line flung from its window, as in Martial's quarters at Formia, offered rest and refreshment at tables spread beneath the great oak tree from which it takes its name. The breeze blew fresh but soft from the "purple fan" of the sea, and the laughter of the waves mingled with that of a trickling fountain in the courtyard. The welcome shade and quiet after the long, dusty drive gave point to the verse with which Horace ends the record of this part of his journey:

in Mamurrarum lassi deinde urbe manemus.¹

For us the stay was only of a brief half-hour. But the weariness was less than the exhilaration, and the overnight hospitality of a Murena was craved only for the opportunity it might have given for further yielding to the *Wanderlust*.

¹ Hor. *Sat.* i. 5. 37.